

Number: 2



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C14/0831/11/CR & C14/0832/11/LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.  
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Application Number: C14/0831/11/CR  
Date Registered: 31/08/2016  
Application Type : Listed Building Consent  
Community: Bangor  
Ward: Deiniol

Proposal: CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF THE EXISTING SHOP, INSTALL A NEW SHOP FRONT AND CONSTRUCT A TWO-STOREY EXTENSION ON TOP OF THE EXISTING REAR EXTENSION TO CREATE 2 SHOPS AND ACCOMMODATION FOR 65 STUDENTS  
Location: CASTLE HILL ARCADE, 196 , HIGH STREET, BANGOR, GWYNEDD, LL57 1NU

**Summary of the Recommendation:** TO REFUSE

**1. Description:**

- 1.1 This application is a listed building application to change the use of part of the existing shop, namely the former Debenhams shop on the High Street in Bangor, installing a new shop front and constructing a two-storey extension on top of the existing rear extension to create two shops and accommodation for 64 students.
- 1.2 The existing building is used for commercial units on the ground and first floors and the remainder of the building remains vacant. It is proposed to convert the existing building and build a two-storey extension at the rear on top of the existing single-storey extension. The ground floor would continue to have commercial use for two separate units with the remainder of the building, along with the new extension, creating living accommodation for 64 students. There will be 12 bedrooms on the first floor of the existing building and six on the second floor. It is proposed to undertake internal conversion work in order to restructure the building by removing old partition walls and installing new ones, along with installing secondary glazing on the original windows but it is not proposed to undertake any external adaptations to the front of the existing building.
- 1.3 At the rear of the existing building there is a flat-roof extension which is modern and quite plain. This location is behind the main building and is not visible from the High Street at all only from the rear of the site. It is proposed to construct a two-storey flat roof extension on the existing single-storey flat roof extension which will have the same footprint and will be three-storeys in total and similar to the main building. There would be 14 bedrooms on the first floor, 16 on the second floor and 16 on the third floor, namely a total of 46 student accommodation rooms within the new extension. These would be en-suite rooms with communal cooking facilities provided in separate rooms; there would be approximately seven bedrooms for each kitchen. The new extension would have a flat roof with rendering to be in-keeping with the existing building and it is proposed to install aluminium windows.
- 1.4 It is also proposed to install a new shop front at the front of the building which will mainly retain the existing appearance but the access will change to create a separate access to the two commercial units and will be fabricated from aluminium. The development also includes landscaping work to the rear, along with an area for cycle storage (25 in total) and a bin storage area. No parking provision forms part of the proposal.

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

1.5 The site is located on the High Street in the centre of the City of Bangor and in close proximity to the Cathedral. The building is a grade II listed building and is located within the Bangor Conservation Area.

**2. Relevant Policies:**

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but must also take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act; in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed decision.

**2.3 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:**

B2 – ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS IN THEIR CURTILAGE - Ensure that proposals do not cause substantial damage to the special architectural or historical character of Listed Buildings.

B3 – DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING - Ensure that proposals have no adverse effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and that they conform to a number of criteria aimed at safeguarding the special character of the Listed Building and the local environment.

B4 – DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR THAT AFFECTS THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS - Ensure that proposals within conservation areas, or which affect their setting, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

**2.4 National Policies:**

The Welsh Office Circular 61/96 – Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas.  
 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 8, January 2016) Chapter 6: Conserving the Historic Environment

**3. Relevant Planning History:** - No relevant planning history.

**4. Consultations:**

Community/Town Council: Object - over-development of the site, a difficult access into the building and no need for more student units within the area (response was received on the basis of amended plans).

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

The Council for British Archaeology: Not received

The Victorian Society: Not received

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales: Not received

Ancient Monuments Society: We welcome the continued use of this building, but have concerns about certain aspects of the application:

- Replacement of windows to main elevation – what is the age and interest of the existing windows and what is the justification for their removal?
- Proposed rear extension- demolition. The survey and drawings are not clear which sections of the listed building are to be demolished. It would also be useful to see a detailed assessments of the significance of the rear section.
- Proposed rear extension – appearance. The design for the proposed new building is rather bland – rendered walls with white-framed PVCu windows will give it a stark appearance. How will this impact on the setting of the listed building and the surrounding area?

(Amended plans were received and the Society was consulted again. However, no further correspondence was received on the amendments.)

The Georgian Group: Not received

British Archaeological Council: Not received

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: Not received

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on site and an advertisement was placed in the press and nearby residents were informed. The advertising period has ended and a number of correspondences were received objecting on the following grounds:

- Lack of information, incorrect or vague information regarding the application.
- Creating a new footpath which will cause a loss of privacy
- Refuse storage issues
- Parking matters
- Increase in traffic
- Privacy matters with regard to the new rear

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

- windows
- Noise issues
- Issues regarding wildlife on the plot of land at the rear
- Mature trees on the plot of land at the rear
- No mention of full-time workers in the building - manager or similar
- No details on the ventilation and heating system
- Installing lights on the plot of land at the rear would create an issue of privacy for neighbouring residents
- Impact on nearby residents and treatment of boundaries and access issues
- Matters relating to need
- Errors with the application forms and land ownership
- Student units are an over-development of the area

Following discussions between the Planning Service and the Agent, the design of the proposal was amended and several original/existing elements of the building are retained, namely the windows and the stairs and there was a second consultation on the amended plans and a further two objections have been received based on:

- Overlooking
- The same issues noted in the original objections which are noted above

There was a further consultation on the amended plans which had been received showing the rear elevations.

## **5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:**

- 5.1 As this is a listed building application, the only matters that are assessed are the conservation matters, namely the impact on the appearance and historical character and architectural nature of the listed structure. There are no other matters that are relevant in assessing this application.
- 5.2 Paragraph 68 of the Welsh Office Circular 61/96 "Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas" states that Local Planning Authorities should have particular regard for the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Policy B2 of the GUDP upholds this and states that proposals for external or internal alterations, additions or change of use of Listed Buildings will be approved provided that the proposal will not cause significant harm to the special architectural or historic character of the building.
- 5.3 The application details have been outlined in the description at the beginning of this report. From the aspect of the original building, this is a three-storey building which

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

is located on the High Street within Bangor City. The existing building is used to house commercial units on the ground and first floors and the remainder of the building has remained vacant for some time and there have been several internal adaptations over the years. The proposal of securing long-term use for the building is to be welcomed. It is proposed to make some alterations to the front of the building, namely to the shop front, to create two separate accesses for the two commercial units and to retain a separate access for the student units. The remainder of the front of the building will remain as it is, including retaining and repairing the original timber windows on the first and second floors and the existing quite modern shop front being replaced with new aluminium frames and thus retaining a similar appearance.

- 5.4 It is proposed to undertake internal conversion work in order to re-structure the ground floor to create two units by removing and installing new partitions and it is also proposed to retain the original staircase. The ground floor would continue its use as two separate commercial units and the remainder of the building, along with the new extension, would create living provision for 64 students. There would be 12 bedrooms on the first floor of the original building and six bedrooms on the second floor. It is not considered that converting the original building would excessively affect the appearance or character of the listed building and converting it would be a way of ensuring use once again which would ultimately secure the long term use of the building. It is not considered that converting the front or the internal adaptations would be likely to cause the loss of any architectural feature as these have been safeguarded within the proposal.
- 5.5 At the rear of the building there is a flat-roof single-storey extension which is modern and quite plain. It is proposed to construct a two-storey flat roof extension on top of the existing single-storey extension with several openings for windows. This location is to the rear of the main building and it is not visible from the High Street, only from the rear of the site. On the first floor, 14 bedrooms would be provided, 16 on the second floor and 16 on the third floor, which is a total of 46 student rooms within the new extension. These would be en-suite rooms with communal cooking facilities provided in separate rooms.
- 5.6 The original part of the building extends out into the rear and it is two-storeys with a slate pitched roof. The new two-storey extension would be combined with this original section. No details have been submitted to show how the new extension is joined to the original extension. As it is, the existing single-storey extension is secondary to the main building and quite plain and in principle officers have no objection to an extension of a suitable scale and design on this section. Despite the existence of a flat-roof single-storey building at the rear of the main building, this cannot be considered a basis to justify the construction of a substantial two-storey flat roof extension of an insensitive design on the top of it as it is considered that it would dominate the main building and would have a severe impact on its character. Despite the fact that the proposed extension is to the rear of the site and it is quite concealed from public places, this is not justification either for an extension of this scale, volume, form and design as it is considered that it would have a substantial detrimental impact on the appearance and character of the listed building. The Welsh Office Circular 61/96 states that modern extensions should not dominate the existing building in terms of scale, materials or location, and it is considered in this case that the proposal does not satisfy all the criteria.
- 5.7 Based on the above, it is considered that the principle of converting the original building is acceptable and complies with the requirements of policies B2, B3 and B4 of the GUDP, along with the requirements of Welsh Office Circular 61/96 which

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/09/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

states "Many listed buildings can sustain a degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses".

- 5.8 In light of the above, it is not considered that the flat roof two-storey extension to the rear of the existing building is a suitable or sensitive extension and, therefore, it does not respect the listed building. It is considered that it is possible to design a far more appropriate extension to its setting that would respect the historical features of the listed building of which it would form a part. The existing flat roof extension is no basis on which to support another extension which would have a cumulative effect and crucially, the Circular notes "some listed buildings are the subject of subsequent applications for their adaptation or for extensions: in such cases it must be borne in mind that minor works of mediocre quality, that individually could be of little importance, but together could be very destructive to the special interests of the building".

## **6. Conclusions:**

- 6.1 It is considered that the principle of the proposal to re-use and adapt the existing building, where its condition has been gradually deteriorating for some years, is to be welcomed and in principle, the proposal before the committee is a means of securing the future of this substantial building which is a listed building. Despite this, and as outlined above, it is considered that the new two-storey extension would create a dominant and insensitive feature and this would have a substantial detrimental effect on the appearance and character of the listed building. Therefore, it is considered that it is not possible to support the application in its current form because of its scale, bulk, form and design which would dominate the listed building and it would have a substantial detrimental effect on its historic character and thus, it is considered that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of policies B2, B3, and B4 of the GUDP and the guidance provided in Circular 61/96 and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

## **7. Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To refuse :

It is considered that the proposal because of its size, bulk, form and design would have a significant detrimental impact on the appearance and setting of the Grade II listed building and, therefore, it is contrary to policies B2, B3 and B4 of the GUDP and the requirements of the Welsh Office Circular 61/69.